

Message Text

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ACTION COA-02

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 IO-12 ADP-00 INT-08 EB-11 COME-00

TRSE-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00 CG-00 INRE-00 CIAE-00

DODE-00 PM-07 H-02 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03

RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-15 GAC-01 RSR-01 /113 W

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O 221357 Z MAY 73

FM AMEMBASSY OSLO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6674

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY HELSINKI

AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

USMISSION NATO

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

COMICEDEFOR

USDOCS AFNORTH KOLSAAS NO

USLO SACLANT

C O N F I D E N T I A L OSLO 1918

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PBOR IC UK NO

SUBJECT: ICELAND- UK FISHING DISPUTE : NORWAY WILLING TO MEDIATE

REFS: (A) OSLO 1905 NOTAL (B) USNATO 2480

BEGIN SUMMARY. THE NORWEGIAN GOVT WILL ANNOUNCE THIS AFTER-
NOON THAT IT IS MAKING PARALLEL DEMARCHES IN LONDON AND
REYKJAVIK ON THE ICELANDIC FISHING SITUATION. WE ARE TOLD
THAT NORWAY HOPES TO AVOID TAKING SIDES PUBLICLY AND WILL
BE PREPARED TO PLAY A MEDIATORY ROLE IF DESIRED BY THE
PARTIES TO THE DISPUTE. END SUMMARY.

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1. AN EMBOFF CALLED ON LEIF EDWARDSSEN, DEPUTY DIRECTOR FOR POLITICAL AFFAIRS IN THE FOREIGN MINISTRY, TODAY (MAY 22) FOR A READING ON HOW THE NORWEGIAN GOVT PLANS TO PROCEED IN THE ICELAND FISHING DISPUTE. TOP LEVELS OF THE FOREIGN MINISTRY ARE PREOCCUPIED WITH THE WORSENING SITUATION, AND THE CALL WAS BRIEF.

2. EDWARDSSEN SAID THE NORWEGIAN GOVT IS GREATLY CONCERNED, NOT SO MUCH BECAUSE OF THE FISHING PROBLEM-- THOUGH IT IS IMPORTANT-- BUT BECAUSE OF THE GENERAL POLITICAL SITUATION: COHESION AND SOLIDARITY WITHIN NATO, THE IMAGE OF NATO AND PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR NATO AND FOR ICELAND , AND ICELAND' S ATTITUDES TOWARD THE ICELAND DEFENSE FORCE. NORWAY IS, THEREFORE, VERY WORRIED BY THE " INTERFERENCE" OF THE BRITISH NAVY; ON THE OTHER HAND, HE CONTINUED, THERE IS THE LEGAL SITUATION, " WHICH IS DISPUTED."

3. AFTER SERIOUS CONSIDERATION OF WHAT TO DO, THE NORWEGIAN GOVT HAS DECIDED TO MAKE DEMARCHES IN BOTH LONDON AND REYKJAVIK. THE FOREIGN MINISTRY WILL ANNOUNCE THESE DEMARCHES LATER THIS AFTERNOON AND STATE THAT NORWAY HOPES TO BE ABLE TO CONTRIBUTE TO FINDING A SOLUTION TO THE CONFLICT. WHILE UNWILLING TO DISCLOSE THE CONTENT OF THE DEMARCHES, EDWARDSSEN SAID THE ARGUMENTATION USED IN THE TWO CAPITALS WOULD DIFFER BUT THAT, ESSENTIALLY, THE NORWEGIANS WILL REFRAIN FROM TAKING SIDES. THE MINISTRY ALSO HOPES BOTH IN THIS AFTERNOON' S PRESS RELEASE AND IN PUBLIC UTTERANCES FROM POLITICIANS TO AVOID EXPRESSIONS OF OPINION, SO THAT NORWAY WILL BE IN A POSITION TO CONTRIBUTE TO A SOLUTION, POSSIBLY THROUGH A MEDIATORY ROLE, IF THE PARTIES SO DESIRE.

4. EDWARDSSEN ADMITTED THAT THIS CAUTIOUS APPROACH APPLIED TO THE GOVT; HE COULD NOT VOUCH FOR THE REST OF THE COUNTRY WHERE SYMPATHY, AS HE NOTED, IS OVERWHELMINGLY ON THE SIDE OF THE ICELANDERS. (IN AN OFF- THE- RECORD REMARK, HE NOTED THAT IN ONE OF YESTERDAY' S STRATEGY SESSIONS IT HAD BEEN OBSERVED THAT, " IF YOU' RE SMALL ENOUGH, YOU CAN GET AWAY WITH ANYTHING.")

5. EDWARDSSEN SAID, IN RESPONSE TO A QUESTION, THAT THE
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GOVT HAS NOT CONSIDERED WHETHER TO MAKE A STATEMENT IN THE NORTH ATLANTIC COUNCIL. CROWE

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